Are the Sahabah a Criterion for Right and Wrong?

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It would be naive to apply the routine criteria to judge the status and stature of the Sahabah (RA) as we do for other earthlings. For, it is a manifest truth that the authenticity of the historical narrations is too unreliable to compare with the overwhelming authenticity of Rasoolullah's (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) Ahaadeeth. No great efforts were made to remove the unauthentic bulk of information from the authentic in the context of historical data whilst no pains were spared in doing so in the compilation of the Ahaadeeth.

Imam Suyuti (RA), in his book *Tadribur Rawi* reports that Imam Bukhari (RA) used to say that from the 300,000 Ahaadeeth which I have memorized, I have compiled the *Sahih Bukhari* which contains 4,000 non-repeated Ahaadeeth. This vast difference is solely due to the strict rules and principles which Imam Bukhari (RA) adhered to in sifting authentic Ahaadeeth from the non-authentic ones.

Similarly, Imam Muslim (RA) compiled his *Sahih Muslim* which contains 4.000 from 300,000 Ahaadeeth which he had at his disposal. Similar is the case with Imam Aboo Dawood (RA) who had 500,000 Ahaadeeth and Imam Ahmad (RA) who had 750,000 Ahaadeeth.

There is no parallel of the like in the history of mankind – no case with even a distant similarity – where historical narrations in their details ever passed from generation to generation (and for all posterities to come) of a grand delivery of precisely the exact words and messages, in the manner in which Rasoolullah's (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) traditions were handed over to people through all times to come in conformity with Rasoolullah's (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) desire which were expressed by him in the following words:

(a) "Pass on from me even if it be one word." (Hadeeth)
(b) "Whoever reports contrary to my teachings should prepare his abode in Hell (fire)." (Hadeeth)

If the historical facts and fallacies, data and narrations were to be put to test on the touchstone of authenticity – as is done with Hadeeeth – then ninety-five per cent (if not more) of the information that has trickled down to us would fall through.

Thus, the application of historical text and data explaining the character of the Sahabah (RA) would be a futile exercise, for, what

الحـمـد لله رب العالمين ، والصلاة والسلام على أشرف المرسلين ، وآلـه ، أزواجه وذريته ، وأصحابه : الغر الميـامين ، ومن تبعهم بـاحسان إلى يوم الدين وبعد :

THE STATUS AND STATURE OF THE SAHABAH (RA)

OR

THE COMPANIONS OF RASOOLULLAH

THE stature of the Sahabah (RA) cannot be judged with a common yardstick meant for adjudicating the measure of success and the assessment of achievements in terms of historical narrations and data. That yardstick is too small a scale for the Sahabah (RA) who are that Holy and Pious group who form an 'Allah-blessed Link' between Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) and his Ummah. Without this link,

(a) the Qur'aan would not have had reached us (The Ummah); nor
(b) the Traditions (Ahaadeeth); nor
(c) even the Risaalah (prophethood) of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam); nor
(d) would Islam have reached us — had it not been for these pious links.

They were the Companions of our Beloved Rasool of Allah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). The Sahabah (RA) were the faithful soldiers of Islam who held Rasoolullah's (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) teachings in higher and greater esteem than their wives, children and wealth. They sacrificed their lives to spread the teachings of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). Their character is in fact, the true reflection of the character of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam).

well pleased is Allah with them as they with Him; for them has He prepared Gardens under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is supreme triumph."

(Qur'aan: Surah Taubah: Aayah 100)

It follows from the above verses that Allah is pleased with the Sahabah (RA) and all those who follow in their footsteps. Their eternal resting place is Jannah.

The great commentator of the Holy Qur'aan, Allamah Ibne Katheer (RA) in his commentary of these verses has given the following description:

"A painful doom awaits those people who hold the Sahabah (RA) or some of the Sahabah (RA) as enemies or even speak ill of them. What is the position (and condition) of their Iman and belief in the Qur'aan (after criticising and speaking ill of these people) with whom the Creator has announced His pleasure? (as He has declared "...Allah is pleased with them as they with Allah")

After quoting the above verses, Allamah Ibne Abdul Barr (RA), in his book, *Muqaddamatul-Isti'aab*, has stated the following:

"The person with whom Allah is pleased, He shall never become displeased (with him) again – Insha-Allah. Because if He does become displeased with someone after He had already declared that He is pleased with him, it would mean that at the time He had declared His pleasure, He did not know of their ultimate result and their final destination. And, without doubt, this is absurd. Therefore, after the declaration of The All-Knowing, it is inevitable that their abode is Jannah."

Hafiz Ibne Taymiyyah (RA) in his book entitled *As-Sareemul Maslool Ala Shatmir-Rasool* has stated the following:

"Allah can be pleased only with such a person who, during his life-span fulfils His "causes of pleasure". And the person with whom Allah becomes pleased once, Allah will never become displeased with him again."

It is not our intention to stud this dissertation with Qur'aanic verses that show the virtues of the Sahabah (RA) but rather to bring into sharp focus the pristine beauty of Allah's pleasure with them and His

is primarily required is the study of the Holy Qur'aan, the Traditions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) and Ijmaa'.

Not only has Allah portrayed a splendid character and a serene disposition of the Sahabah (RA) in the Holy Qur'aan, but a study of the Ahaadeeth of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) also reveals the same.

Qur'aanic Proofs:

A "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers (but) merciful (compassionate) to each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer) seeking grace from Allah and (His) good pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Tauraat and their similitude in the Gospel -- like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong, then it becomes thick and it stands on its own stem (filling) the sower with delight. As a result, it fills the disbelievers with rage at them. Allah has promised those amongst them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great reward." (Qur'aan: Surah Al-Fath: Aayah 29)

Aboo Urwah Zubairi (RA) has reported that once they were seated in the company of Imam Maalik (RA) when people referred to a person who used to speak ill of some Sahabah (RA). Imam Maalik (RA) quoted the above verse till "... as a result, it fills the disbelievers with rage at them" and then he (Imam Maalik) said that whosoever has in his heart any fury, rage against the Sahabah (RA), this verse shall apply to him, ie. his Iman would be at stake as fury and rage at the Sahabah (RA) is a sign of *kufr* because it was the disbelievers who were filled with rage and fury at the Sahabah (RA).

(Maqaame-Sahabah by Mufti M. Shafee: p 40)

B In another Aayah of the Holy Qur'aan it is mentioned:
"... on that day (of Qiyaamah) Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him."

(Qur'aan: Surah Tahreem: Aayah 8)

C The vanguards (of Islam), the first of those who forsook (their homes) (ie. the Muhajireen), and those who gave them aid (ie. the Ansaar), and those who follow them in (all) good deeds,

scholar of the Arabic language will agree thereby stressing that whoever speaks ill of the Sahabah (RA) is My (Allah's) enemy.

(b) Further, Allah Ta'aala states:

> "They, (the Munafiqeen) say: 'Surely, if we return to Madinah, the stronger shall remove the weaker.' Strength and power belong to Allah, to His Rasool and to the Believers; but the Munafiqeen know not." (Surah Munafiqeen: Verse: 8)

Shah Abdul Qaadir Muhaddith Dehlavi (RA), in his Tafseer entitled *Maudhahul-Qur'aan*, writes in the commentary of the above verse that in one journey, a Muhaajir and an Ansaar happened to quarrel over some matter. Despite a reconciliation by Rasoolullah (sallallaah alayhi-wasallam), the Munafiqeen (hypocrites) capatalized on the situation and began saying things amongst themselves that were unbecoming. Some said: Had we not given them (the Muhajireen who came from Makkah) a dwelling place (in Madinah), they would not have fought with us today.' Others said: 'Why not stop caring and looking after them.' Still others remarked: 'Upon our return to Madinah, the strong and mighty amongst us should drive out the weak ones (the Muhajireen) from the city (of Madinah).'

A Sahabi (RA) who overheard this conversation of the Munafiqeen, reported it to Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). When Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) enquired from the Munafiqeen about this incident, they openly denied such statements under oath. In fact, they said that the Sahabi who had reported this had lied due to his enmity towards them. In other words they had accused the Sahabi of having told a lie and back-biting. Allah Ta'aala immediately comes to the rescue of the Sahabi by revealing the above Aayah, informing Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) that he had spoken the truth, thus, exonerating him. (Observe Allah's overwhelming love for the Sahabi!)

(c) Allah Ta'aala says in Surah Baqarah, Aayah 15:

> "When they (Munafiqeen) meet those who believe, they say 'we too are believers', but when they meet their evil geniuses in privacy, they say, 'Indeed, we are with you. We are only mocking at these people.' (Little do they realize that) Allah is mocking at them and will give them rope (grace) in their tresspasses so that they will wander blindly in their stubbornness."

blessings in the Hereafter.

Furthermore, if the non-believers cursed or spoke ill of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam), Allah Ta'aala, Himself answered them on behalf of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) as can be seen from the following:

(a) When Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) invited the Mushrikeen of Makkah towards Islam and towards the unity of Allah, the accursed Aboo Lahab said to Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) cursingly: "May you be ruined and destroyed." He even gesticulated with his hands and threw a stone at Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). To this, Allah Ta'aala ordained as mentioned in Suratul-Lahab: "May the hands of the Father of Flame perish. (Yes) may they perish!" (Qur'aan: Suratul-Lahab: Aayah 1)

When Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) was called "insane", Allah Ta'aala answered: "Thou art not, by the grace of Thy Lord, mad or possessed." (Qur'aan: Suratul-Qalam: Aayah 2)

When the "Source of Mercy for the Worlds" was called a "Poet" then the "Master of the Worlds" answered on his behalf: "We have not instructed him (the Prophet) in poetry nor does it (poetry) suit him." (Qur'aan: Surah Yaseen: Aayah 69)

Similarly, when the Mushrikeen of Makkah and the Munafiqeen of Madinah cursed and spoke ill of the Sahabah (RA), Allah Ta'aala answered on their behalf as well. Speaking ill and cursing Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) is a grave and serious crime. Likewise, speaking ill of the Sahabah (RA) is also a misdemeanour which calls for reprimand from Allah, The Omnipotent. Hence, Allah Ta'aala states in the Holy Qur'aan: "And when it is said to them (ie. the Munafiqeen): 'Believe sincerely as the other people have believed', they reply: 'should we believe as the fools believe?' Beware! They themselves are fools but they know it not!"

(Qur'aan: Surah Baqarah: Aayah 13)

Take cognizance. When the Munafiqeen (hypocrites) called the Sahabah (RA) "fools", Allah immediately observed "Beware! They themselves are fools but they know it not." Note how Allah Ta'aala employs a sentence which contains four forms of emphasis – as any

The persons who are the foremost to answer this description are the Noble Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam).

(3) "And the first to lead the way from the Muhajireen* and the Ansaar*, and those who follow them in goodness, Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him and He has prepared for them Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is The Supreme Triumph."
(Surah Taubah, IX; 100)

In this verse two classes of the Noble Companions have been described: one is that of the earliest predecessors and the other is of that of those who had embraced The Faith afterwards. In spite of this difference Allah Ta'aala makes the declaration that 'Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him'.

Allamah Ibne Abdul Barr (RA) says in the introduction of *Isti'aab* that with whomsoever Allah becomes pleased once, He will never become displeased with him again. Why? Because the past and future is in the knowledge of Allah. As such He can be pleased with only such a person with regard to whom He has first hand knowledge that he would not, in the future, act and behave contrary to Divine Pleasure. Thus, the declaration of Divine Pleasure for anyone is a guarantee that his end will come in a good condition and in future, too, he will never act and behave in a manner which is contrary to the concept of Divine Pleasure.

(4) "...then Allah sent down His peace of reassurance upon His Messenger and upon the Believers and imposed upon them the word of self-restraint, for they were worthy of it and meant for it. And Allah is aware of all things." (Surah Fatah: XLVIII: 26)

Needless to say that those who were Believers during the blessed era of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) were none others than the Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). The above Aayah naturally refers to them.

(5) "But the Messenger and those who believe with him strive with their wealth and their lives. Such are they for whom are the

*Muhajireen: Those Sahabahs (RA) who migrated from Makkah to Madinah.
*Ansaar: Those Sahabahs (RA) who welcomed and assisted the Muhajireen.

We understand from the above verse that the Munafiqeen (hypocrite: had mocked and fooled the Sahabah (RA) by concealing the truth (their disbelief in Allah and by exposing what they did not believe i In answer to this Allah Ta'aala answered in a similar fashion — th: in reality He was mocking at them (implying that He was merel giving them grace not to mention a painful doom that awaited then

Now any person who possesses some degree of understanding and th least amount of fear for Allah Ta'aala will realize that it is a heinou crime to utter evil against the illustrious Sahabah (RA). Hence, suc a person will exercise utmost caution with regards to the honou and sanctity of such great personalities.

THE SAHABAH (RA) ARE JANNATEES

> "(Those) among you are not equal — who spent (freely) ar fought before The Victory — with those who did so later. Tho are higher in rank than those who spent (freely) and fougl after (The Victory) but to all has Allah promised a good. reward and Allah is well aquainted with all that you do."
>
> (Qur'aan: Surah Hadeed: Aayah 1(

Allah Ta'aala has divided the Sahabah (RA) into two categorie those who accepted and believed in the Unity of Allah Ta'aala befo the Conquest of Makkah and those who embraced Imaan after tl Conquest of Makkah. Although, according to the Qur'aan, the status vary but for both these groups Allah had promised goc rewards which is termed as "Al-Husna" in the Qur'aan. Is there ar other place where they will be rewarded with "Good Rewards" th: in Jannah? The Tafseer on page 449 of Jalalain Shareef bears tes mony to this fact.

We wish to quote more verses from the Qur'aan Shareef to pro this fact beyond doubt:

(1) "You are the best community that has been raised up for (tl benefit and reformation of) mankind."

(Surah Aale-Imraan: iii: 11

(2) "Thus we have appointed you as a middle nation, that you m: be witnesses against mankind." (Baqarah: ii: 14

In the above verse Allah has praised all the companions and has promised them good rewards.

(10) "Those who believed and left their homes and strove for the cause of Allah, and those (Ansaar) who took them (Muhajireen) in (ie. accommodated them) – those are the Believers in truth. For them is pardon and a bountiful provision." (Anfaal:74)

In this verse Allah Ta'aala praises all the Muhajireen and Ansaar and testifies to their truthfulness and firm belief. Then He promises them pardon and bountiful provision.

STATUS OF THE SAHABAH (RA) ACCORDING TO THE HADEETH

The authentic books of Hadeeth are replete with traditions and narrations emphasising the status of the Sahabah (RA). Some of these are reproduced hereunder:

(1) Do not speak ill of my Companions, for, if anyone amongst you gives in charity gold equivalent to Mount Uhud, this shall never be equal to the charity of one *mud* (bushel) or even half a *mud* given by a Sahabi. (Bukhari, Muslim, Aboo Dawood)

The Arabic word *sabbun* (to speak ill) does not only mean abusive language but also connotes belittling, slandering or rebuking someone.

It is reported in Tirmizi by Hazrat Abdullah bin Mughaffal (RA) that Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) said:

"Fear Allah, fear Allah with respect to my Sahabah. (After my demise) do not make them targets of abuse. For the person who shows love to them, does so with my love; and the person who displays enmity towards them does so with my enmity; and the person who harasses them has harassed me; and the person who has harassed me has harassed Allah. Lo! punishment is near to him who harasses Allah."

In the above Hadeeth, Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) equates the love for a Sahabi to the love for Rasoolullah (S.A.W.). This has two connotations: (a) A person will love the Sahabah only if he loves Rasoolullah (S.A.W.). (b) Rasoolullah (S.A.W.) loves the

good things; such are they who will prosper." (IX: 88)

(6) "Those who believe and leave their homes and strive in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons have the highest rank in the sight of Allah. They are the people who will achieve salvation." (IX: 20)

"Their Sustainer gives them glad tidings of Mercy from Himself and of His Good Pleasure and of Gardens for them wherein are delights that will endure." (IX: 20, 21)

(7) "...on the day when Allah will not abase the Messenger and those who believe with him. Their light (noor) will run before them and on their right hands." (Surah Tahreem: 8)

Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi (RA) says that this verse implies that there will be no chastisement for the Sahabah (RA) in the Hereafter and that their light (noor) will not decline even after the demise of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) (Tohfah Ithnaa Ashariyyah: p 530)

(8) "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful amongst themselves. You (O Muhammad!) will see them bowing and falling prostrate (in worship), seeking the Bounty from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. Their mark is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration." (Surah Fatah: 29)

The generality among the professional commentators of the Holy Qur'aan such as Imam Qurtabi etc. have said that the phrase "wallazini aamanoo" in this verse is "general". Hence, it takes within its scope the entire Sahabah fraternity - without any discrimination. Moreover, the Sahabah's correct performance, their purification and their praise and laudation have been described by non other than the Master of the Universe, Himself.

(9) "Those who spent and fought before the Victory (of Makkah) are not upon the same level (with those who did so later). Such are greater in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards. Unto each has Allah promised a goodly reward.* And Allah is well informed with what you do." (Hadeed: 10)

remaining part, it was due to error of judgement or unintentional misinterpretation of Rasoolullah's (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) command. (For example, the Archers leaving the mountain pass in search of booty during the Battle of Uhud).

"And if we do assume their wrongs to be deliberate and intentional then it should be borne in mind that their shortcomings had been assuredly forgiven by Allah Ta'aala for one of the following reasons: (a) they had either repented as the Qur'aan bears testimony to this; or (b) their sins had been compensated for by their good deeds or through some calamity befalling them."

The Qur'aan and Ahadeeth bear testimony to the fact that the shortcomings and sins of the Sahabah (RA) have been forgiven by Allah.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

If the Sahabah (RA) were not *ma'soom* (innocent) like the messengers of Allah Ta'aala; and many a fault or wrong is attributed to some of them, why then should ill not be spoken of them? The answer to this question is that the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah hold the belief that though the Sahabah (RA) are not *ma'soom* yet no ill should be spoken of them for the following reasons:

(1) They enjoy a special privilege over the non-Sahabi in that they were closely and intimately linked with him who is the best among the creations of Allah Ta'aala, ie. Rasoolullah (sallallaah-alayhi-wasallam). By virtue of this companionship, their life pattern was in total conformity with the teachings of Shari'ah, and, hence, sins and acts contrary to the Shari'ah were a rarity.

(2) Their intense love for the Creator and His beloved Rasool (sallalaahu-alayhi-wasallam) together with their fear for Allah Ta'aala made them repent immediately for any sin they may have committed. In fact, they would present themselves to Rasoo-lullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) so that he could cleanse them by meting out to them the appropriate punishment. This they did despite knowing fully that according to the Qur'aan and Rasoolullah's (S.A.W.) teachings that one who repents after committing a sin is like one who had not even committed the sin.

person who loves the Sahabah (RA). The same is understood from the phrase "the person who shows enmity towards the Sahabah does so with my enmity".

In view of the above explanation this Hadeeth is sufficient warning for those who openly and indiscriminately vilify and criticise the Noble Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). For, it is through such criticism and vilification that many a naive and simple-minded Muslim suffers the guilt of losing respect for and confidence in the illustrious Sahabah (RA). This, obviously, gives rise to the *naqal* (transmissions) of the Sahabah (RA) becoming doubtful and questionable. Thus, the authenticity of not only the Hadeeth but also the Qur'aan and Islam itself, would become questionable. Why? Because it is an undisputed fact that the Ahadeeth, Qur'aan and Islam itself were transmitted to the Ummah by non other than the Noble Sahabah (RA).

Furthermore, the Muhadditheen are unanimous that the Sahabah (RA) are *Adool*. Ibne Salaah (RA) had defined *Adool* in the following words: "A Muslim who is mature and intelligent and who safequards himself against sins and acts which are contrary to ethics and moral behaviour", ie. impoliteness, cruelty, deceipt etc.

It is a universally accepted fact that only the messengers of Allah are *ma'soom* (innocent) and free from sins, and that such qualities may not be attributed to anyone other than the apostles of Allah— not even the Sahabah (RA). This is true. That is why it is found that the Sahabah (RA) did at one time or another, commit errors and sins for which they had to even bear some mode of punishments. However, this does not render any ordinary person the license to criticise, abuse and vilify such close associates of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). Why? Because it was not without reason and wisdom that they were made to err.

Perhaps, one purpose of exposing their error was to demonstrate the method to be adopted for meting out a certain Islamic punishment.

Allamah Ibne Taymiyyah (RA) states in his book *Sharhul-Aqeedatil-Waasitiyyah*:

"...of all those wrongs which are attributed to the Sahabah (RA), the greater part of them are mere allegations. As for the

(2) It is reported on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar (RA) that Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) said: "All those things which befell the Bani Isra'eel will befall my Ummah as well. The Bani Isra'eel had divided into seventy-two sects; my Ummah will split into seventy-three sects – all of whom will go to Hell save for one which will be absolved." Thereupon the Companions enquired: "Which is that sect (millah)?" He replied: "The way upon which I and my Companions are."

Commenting on the above Hadeeth, Imame-Rabbani Mujaddid Alfe-Thani (RA) says that Rasoolullah (S), in identification of the group that will receive salvation, said: "The way upon which I and my Companions are." Seemingly it would have been sufficient to say: "The way upon which I am." But the reason for mentioning the Companions along with himself is to inform all that his way is the way of his Companions also and that the path of salvation lies also in the following in the foot steps of the Noble Sahabah (RA).
(Ref: Maktubaate-Imam Rabbani: Vol I: pp 102 – 103)

(3) It is reported on the authority of Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) that Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) said: "I asked my Lord regarding dissent among my Companions. Allah revealed to me, saying: 'O Muhammad! Your Companions are such in my sight as the stars in the sky. Some stars are stronger than others but light and brightness is present in each star. So anyone who adopts anything out of their mutual dissent, will be on the guided track in my sight.' " Then Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) said: "My Companions are like the stars; whomever (from among them) you (choose to) follow, you will be guided." (Mishkaat: p 554; Babul-Manaqib)

(4) It is reported by Aboo Burdah who reports from his father that Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) raised his head towards the sky and said: "Stars are the cause for harmony in the skies. When they are gone all the calamities that are to befall the skies will befall them. And I am the source of harmony for my Companions. When I am gone all the misfortunes that are to befall my Companions will befall them. And my Companions are a source of peace for my Ummah; when they are no more, all the tumults and disturbances that are to befall the Ummah will swoop upon them."(Mishkat: p 552)

(3) The Qur'aanic saying:
"Lo! Good deeds anull evil deeds." (Surah Hood: Aayah 114)

(4) Their forebearance in times of hardships, distress, trials and tribulations and their steadfastness by the side of Rasoolullah (S) in the latter's efforts in spreading the Deen of Allah, are inseparable ingredients of their sublime character.

(5) The Sahabah (RA) are a main link between the Messenger (S) and his Ummah. This link serves as a means for transmitting the Qur'aan and other teachings of Rasoolullah (S) to the Ummah. Now any fault-finding in the character of the Sahabah (RA) would impede the propagation and unqualified acceptance of Deen.

(6) Since Allah Ta'aala conferred the honour of His Apostle's companionship to the Sahabah (RA), He also conferred the honour of assuredly forgiving them during their life time. His declaration "Allah is pleased with them and they with Him" is sufficient proof of this. It is testimony for their exoneration and salvation.

(7) Rasoolullah (S) had personally commanded his Ummah to love and revere his companions. He had said that honouring and revering them is a sign of Imaan and abusing them is a sign of diminished Imaan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE AHADEETH AND AUTHENTIC SOURCES TO SHOW THE LOFTY STATUS OF THE SAHABAH (RA)

(1) Rasoolullah (S) has said: "Allah, Most High, cast a glance upon the hearts of His slaves; then He chose Muhammad (S) for apostlehood. Then He cast a glance upon the hearts of His slaves and selected his Companions for him (ie. Rasoolullah (S)) and made them helpers of His religion and his (Rasoolullah's) ministers. So, the work these Muslims (Sahabah) consider as good is also good in the sight of Allah. And the work they consider as bad is also bad in the sight of Allah."

(Ref: Iqaamatul-Hujjah: p 8; Majalisul-Abrar: p 130, Majlis No. 18; Mu'atta Imam Muhammad: p 112; Al-Bidayaa Wan-Nihayah: vol x p 228)

Allamah Ibne Taymiyyah (RA) writes in his Sharhul-Aqidatil-Waasitiyyah:
"It is included among the principles of beliefs of the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah that they keep their hearts and tongues pure in the matter of the Sahabah (RA) even as Allah, Most High, has stated in the following verse:
"Those who entered the city and the faith before them love those ..." " (LIX:9)

(Sharhul-Aqidatil-Waasitiyyah: Egypt Ed. p 403 & Maqaame-Sahabah p79)

Allamah Safaarini (RA) says:
"There is consensus among the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah that it is incumbent on every person that he considers all the Sahabah (RA) as holy and clean, proves justness for them, safegaurds himself from libelling them and compliments them even as Allah Ta'aala has complimented and eulogised them in several verses of His Great Book — the Holy Qur'aan."

(Aqidah-e-Safaarini: Vol. II p 338 & Maqaame-Sahabah p 80)

It is stated in the famous text book of Islamic beliefs entitled *Sharhe-Aqidah-e- Nafisah*: "(From among the beliefs of Islam, one is this that) no mention of the Noble Companions be made but with goodness and kindness."

Similarly, Allamah Jurjani (RA) writes under Seventh Maqsad in his famous book *Sharhe-Mawaqif*: "To revere all the Sahabah (RA) and to abstain from taking exception to any one of them is incumbent. Why? Because Allah is Glorious and He has lauded and praised them in many instances of His Holy Book" (He then quotes the relevent verses and writes) "And Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) used to love them and has eulogised them in many Ahadeeth."

MORE ABOUT THE SAHABAH (RA)

(1) Hadeeth: "As regards my Sahabah, fear Allah, fear Allah. Don't make them a target of criticism after me. He who loves them, does so on account of love for me; he who despises them, does so on account of hatred for me; he who causes any harm to them has caused harm to me; and he who harms me has harmed Allah; and he who harms Allah, it is most likely that Allah will punish him."

(Tirmizi: Vol. ii, p 226; Mishkaat: p 554)

(5) Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) is reported to have said: "Respect my Companions. They are the best among you; then those who will come after them; then those who will come after them. Thereafter, falsehood will become rife – so much so that people will swear oaths without being asked to do so; and people will be willing to give evidence as witnesses without being summoned to do so." (Ibid: p 552)

(6) "If any Companion of mine happens to pass away in any country he will rise up on the Day of Resurrection as a guide and light for the inhabitants of that country." (Tirmizi: Vol: ii p 226)

On account of these praises and merits of the Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam), the Ahlus-Sunnah unanimously believe that the greatest of the great saints cannot attain the status of the lowest of the low Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). Imame Rabbani Mujaddid Alfe Thani (RA) says: "No saint can reach the status of a Companion. Since Uwais Al-Qarni (RA) could not achieve the honour of companionship of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam), despite his lofty position as a great saint and *wali* of Allah, he could not attain the rank of even an ordinary Sahabi (RA). Someone once enquired from Abdullah bin Mubarak (RA): "Is Hadhrat Mu'awiyah superior or Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz?" He replied: "(Let alone the personality of Hadhrat Mu'awiyah), even the dust that had entered the nostrils of the horse of Hadhrat Mu'awiyah (RA) while in the company of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) is by far superior than Umar bin Abdul Aziz (RA)."

Allah is the greatest! How great is the Apostle's company! Hence, it is the belief of the Ahlus-Sunnah that to mistrust the Noble Sahabah (RA), particularly the Muhajireen and the Ansaar, and to speak ill of them is tantamount to open confrontation with the Qur'aan and downright revolt against the Divine Shari'ah. There is apprehension of infidelity (Kufr) for such a person. (Khulafaa-e-Rashideen p 6)

The saint of saints, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (RA) says: "The Ahlus Sunnah are unanimous that to maintain silence regarding dissents that took place among the Companions is compulsory (wajib); and to express and describe their merits and virtues is pertinent."

(Ghunyatut Talibeen p 54)

(RA) wherein he makes mention of ten signs of the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah. From among them, not finding fault with the Sahabah (RA) is one of them."

(Takmilah-e-Bahrur-Ra'iq: Vol. iv, p 183)

(8) It is reported from Hadhrat Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) that he heard about some people who used to defame Hadhrat Ali (RA) before the nobles of the state. Hadhrat Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) said: "Alas! I see that the Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) are defamed before you and you do not refute or prevent it. I have heard with my own ears Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) saying – and understand this also that I need not attribute anything to Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) which he did not say so that when I meet him on the Day of Qiyaamah he takes me to task for it – "Aboo Bakr is in Paradise; Umar is in Paradise; Uthmaan is in Paradise; Ali is in Paradise; Talhah is in Paradise; Zubair is in Paradise; Abdur-Rahmaan bin Auf is in Paradise; Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas is in Paradise; Ubaidah bin Jarraah is in Paradise' " Mentioning the names of these nine Sahabahs (RA), he did not mention the tenth. When the people enquired: "Who is the tenth?" he replied: "Sa'eed bin Zaid." (He did not mention his own name out of humility but revealed it only at the insistence of the people.) Then he continued: "I swear by Allah that a man's joining the Holy Prophet in Jihaad in which his face may have merely been covered by dust is better than the devotions of a lifetime of anyone from among the non-Sahabah although he may be blessed with a life span equivalent to Nooh (AS)."

(Aboo Dawood: Vol. ii, p 291 – Kitabus Sunnah Baab fil Khulafaa)

(9) It is reported by Adi from Ibne Aa'i'shah: "The worst of people from my Ummah are the ones who are bold in speaking ill of my Companions." (Mazahire Haq: Vol. iv, p 583)

(10) Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) is reported to have said: "A slave's meeting Allah in this condition that he had made a bale of the sins of all mankind, carrying it as a burden on his head is better than that he should be nursing enmity and malice in his heart against one of my Companions, for such a person will not be absolved on the Day of Judgement." (Nuzhatul-Majalis: Vol. ii, p 243)

(11) Hadhrat Ibne Abbas (RA) reports Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-

Just ponder on this Hadeeth. Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) refers to the Sahabah (RA) as 'my Companions'; then he declares that love for them is a sign of love for himself. Is it not then open rebellion against Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) to make the Noble Companions a target of unrestrained criticism?

(2) It is reported from Abdullah bin Umar (RA) that Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) said: "When you see such people who run down my Companions, say to them: 'Allah's curse be upon this evil act of yours!' "

(Tirmizi: Vol. 2, p 227; Mishkaat: p 554)

(3) Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) is reported to have said: "Don't decry my Companions for, (their status is such that) if anyone among you happens to spend (in charity) gold equal to Mount Uhud, it cannot be equal to their (charity) of one *mud* – nay, half a *mud* – of barley."

(Muslim: Vol. 1, p 310; Mishkaat: p 553)

(4) Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) is reported to have said: "Allah selected me and selected the Companions for me and made them my helpers and ministers. May the curses of Allah, the angels and all the people descend upon one who decries them! Allah will not accept any of his or her obligatory and supererogatory devotions." (Mazahire-Haq: Vol. iv, p 578)

(5) Hadhrat Anas (RA) reports Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) as saying: "Allah selected me and selected my Companions for me. Then he made them my helpers and relatives. During the last era there will emerge a group that will undermine the status of the Companions. So, neither dine with them nor marry their women nor say prayers with them nor say the funeral prayers for them. Allah's curse has descended upon them." (Ghunyah)

(6) It is reported from Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umar (RA): Don't condemn the Companions of Muhammad (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). An hour of devotions offered by any one of them is better than the devotions of a life time of anyone of you."

(Mazahire-Haq: Vol. iv p 579)

(7) There is another tradition from Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umar

stead, they have resorted to speaking ill of them." (To substantiate her statement) she then recited the verse: "And those who came (into the faith) after them ..." (Ibid)

It is reported that Abdullah bin Umar (RA) heard a man cavilling at one of the Muhajireen (RA). So he recited the following verse before the culprit: "And (it is) for the poor fugitives (Muhajireen) who have been driven out of their homes ..." and said: "This is the description of the Muhajireen. Are you one of them?" The culprit answered: "No." Then he recited the following verse: "Those who entered the city and the faith before them .." and he said: "This is the description of the Ansaar. Are you one of them?" He replied: "No." Then he recited the following verse: "And those who came (into the faith) after them ..." and asked: "Are you from among this group?" He replied: "Yes, I do hope so." Abdullah bin Umar (RA) responded: "No. The person who censures the first two groups can never be from among the third group." (Ibid: p 246)

The same incident is mentioned through another chain of narrators. According to this version, Abdullah bin Umar (RA) said to the culprit: "No. By Allah that man who takes exception to the Muhajireen and Ansaar and harbours enmity in his heart for them can never be from among them (ie the third group)." (Ibid: p 246 Section vi)

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (RA) was once asked: "Is the man who finds fault with Ameer Mu'awiyah (RA) and Amr bin Al-Aas (RA) a *raafidhi* (heretic)?" He replied: "Only that person is bold against them who has viciousness hidden in his heart, and whoever degrades any of the Companions, (without doubt) viciousness does lie hidden in his heart." (Al-Bidayah Wan-Nihayah: Vol. viii, p 139)

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (RA) also says: "It is not at all permissible for anyone to make mention of any fault of their's (ie the Sahabah's) and accuse them of any defect or drawback; anyone who does this, should be disciplined." And his student, Maimooni (RA), says that he heard Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (RA) say: "What has happened to the people that they speak ill of Amir Mu'awiyah (RA)? We seek protection from Allah (from that we should commit such a heinous crime)!" Then he said to me: "When you see a man speaking ill of the Companions, consider his Iman to be doubtful."

(As-Sarimul-Maslool referred to in Maqaame Sahabah, p 77)

alayhi-wasallam) as saying: "The person who cherishes love for my Companions, my holy wives and members of my household and does not cavil at anyone from among them and departs from this world with love for them in his heart will be with me on the Day of Qiyamah." (Nuzhatul-Majalis: Vol. ii, p 243)

In Surah Hashr, Allah Ta'aala categorizes all Muslims into three groups: (a) the Muhajireen with regards whom Allah declares: "They are the loyal ones"; (b) the Ansaar with regards whom He declares: "Such are they who are successful"; (c) those who are to be born till the Day of Judgement. With regard to this group Allah Ta'aala says: "And those who came (into the faith) after them say: 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brethern who were before us in faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour towards those who believe"

Commenting on this verse, Hadhrat Shah Waliyyullah Muhaddith Dehlavi (RA) has quoted a number of Ahadeeth in his *Izalatul-Khifaa*. He quotes as follows:

It is reported from Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas (RA) that he said: "There are three classes of people (ie Muslims). Two of them have passed away. Only one remains. So your best condition is that you enter this remaining class." Then he recited the verse: 'And it is for the poor fugitives (Muhajireen) who have been driven out of their homes", and said: "This is the class of the Muhajireen and it has passed away." Then he recited the verse: "Those who entered the city and the faith ..." and said: "This is the class of the Ansaar; it too has passed away." Then he recited the verse: "And those who came into the faith say: 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brethern who were before us in faith ...' " and he said: "Now this is the only class that has remained. Hence, your best condition is that you identify yourself with this third class of people."

(Izalatul-Khifaa: Maqsade Awwal, Section vi, Vol. ii, pp 245 & 246)

In the commentry of the verse: "And those who came (into the faith) after them ..." it is reported from Zahhaak that "the people had been commanded to seek pardon for the Companions but now see how the people practise innovation!" (Abid: p 246)

It is reported from A'i'shah Siddiqah (RA) that she said: "The Muslims have been commanded (in the Qur'aan) to seek pardon for the Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). But, in-

Muhajireen and Ansaar to be in the wrong. And I don't believe that after holding them to be in the wrong, such a person's good deeds will ascend to the heavens (ie. they will be accepted by Allah).

(Izalatul-Khifaa: p 244)

Allamah Ibne Taymiyyah (RA) says: "After Rasoolullah (sallallaahu--alayhi-wasallam), the best person among the Ummah is Hadhrat Aboo Bakr (RA), then Hadhrat Umar (RA), then Hadhrat Uthmaan (RA). Then all the Sahabah (RA) are the best among mankind. It does not behove anyone to make mention of their names with the slightest of evil or jibe at them. Should anyone do so then it is incumbent upon the Islamic State to punish such a vicious person and make him repent for the crime. If he repents sincerely, his repentance should be accepted; if he does not repent, the punishment should continue and he should be imprisoned indefinitely until he either repents or dies." (As-Saarimul-Maslool: p 573)

Hafiz Az-Zahabi (RA) says: Only such a person is able to acknowthe merits of the Sahabah (RA) who is fimiliar with their conditions, situations and all aspects of their lives – such as their embracing Iman during the life time of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam); their waging Jihaad against the infidels; their propagating and spreading Islam; their promoting Islamic customs; their elevating the Kalimah of Allah and Rasool (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam); their teaching of the obligatory duties (imposed by Allah) and the Sunnah of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). Were it not for the Sahabah (RA), the *usool* and *furu'* of Deen (ie. the basic fundamentals and the branches that issue from the basic principles) would never have reached us; nor would we have learnt any Sunnah or Hadeeth of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). Hence, he who shows any contempt for their honour and dignity, is a renegrade and such a person alienates himself from the Muslims' ways. Why? Because gibing and taunting does not come about as long as one does not give place to their faults and errors in one's heart and as long as one does not harbour any ill feelings for them in one's heart. Therefore, the one who vilifies the Companions, alienates himself from Shari'ah since it is none except the Sahabah (RA) who are the most important link between the Apostle and his Ummah and through whose medium the Ummah acquired the traditional pracrices. Therefore, criticising the medium is tantamount to undermining the source. In other words, undermining the narrators is undermining the

Imam Raazi (RA), who is one of the great Shaikhs of Imam Muslim (RA), says: "When you see a man who resorts to discrediting any one of the Sahabah (RA) then regard him as a *zindeeq*. For the Qur'aan is irrefutably true (Haqq), the Apostle (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) is true, and whatever Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) brought is true. And none but the Sahabah (RA) are the ones who transmitted all these things to us. So the man who offends them has in reality rejected the Book and the Sunnah. So it is better to offend him (rather than offending the Sahabah) and it is absolutely correct to assert that such a culprit is a *zindeeq* (ie. one who professes Islam outwardly but is, in fact, an infidel inwardly)."

(Fathul-Mugeeth: p 375; Mazaahire-Haq: Vol. I, p 578)

Allamah Shibli (RA) says. "One who does not revere the Sahabah (RA) and does not hold them in high esteem does not believe in Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam)."

(Maktoobate Rabbani: Vol. iii, p 46; Maktoobe Farsi: p 24)

Hafiz Ibne Katheer (RA) says: "A painful doom awaits those who harbour rancour against these noble men or against some of them. What relation have such men with *Iman bil-Qur'aan* (ie. faith in the Qur'aan) after they revile those with whom Allah is pleased?"

(Ibne-Katheer referred to in Maqaame-Sahabah p 43)

Hadhrat Shah Waliyyul-lah (RA) says: "We will speak only good of the Sahabah (RA). They are our religious leaders. It is unlawful (haraam) to revile them; it is incumbent upon us to revere and honour them." (Tafheemaate-Ilaahiyyah: Vol. i, p 148)

Hadhrat Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dehlavi (RA) says: "Assuredly, the groups of the Sahabahs (RA) will also be in the order of the Holy Prophets. So even as no criticism can be levelled against any prophet and even as their utterances are incumbent for compliance by virtue of their indisputable categorical proofs, similarly, to merely intend to criticise the honourable Sahabahs (RA) is irreligion and a flagrant deviation from the Right Path."

(Tuhfah Ithna Ashariyyah: p 529)

Sufyaan Ath-Thauri (RA) says: "He who believes that Ali (RA) deserved the *khilaafah* more than Shaikhain (ie. Aboo Bakr and Omar (RA)), he holds Aboo Bakr (RA) and Umar (RA) and all the

of saints to be absolved of mean and base qualities. Then what probability is there that such base qualities be suspected of such personalities who had spent their lives in the company of the 'most superior' among the Apostles of Allah and who had spent their wealth and sacrificed their lives supporting the religion of Islam? Only such a person is capable of levelling such criticism against the Sahabah (RA) who considers the very company of 'the best among mankind' to be inferior to the company of the saints of this Ummah. (May Allah save us from adopting such opinions!) Yet the Ummah is unanimous that no saint of this Ummah can attain the rank of a single Companion much less the rank of the Prophet of the Ummah."

(Maktubate-Imam Rabbani (Persian): Vol. iv, pp 45, 46)

After the prophets of Allah, the holiest group among mankind is that of the Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). This holy group is an Allah-chosen medium between Rasoolullah (sallal-laahu-alayhi-wasallam) and the general Ummah. Without this medium, neither the Qur'aan nor its detailed explanation in the form of Hadeeth could have reached the Ummah. For, Allah says: "And we have revealed unto thee the Remembrance so that thou mayst explain to mankind..." Moreover, without this medium, apostlehood and its objectives could never have been known by the Ummah. These life long Companions of the Prophet (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) are those personalities to whom the teachings of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) were dearer than their own spouses, children and lives; they are those who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of spreading his message to every nook and corner of the world. This was a test for them. Indeed, they had passed in their test of adhering steadfastly to the Sunnate Muhammadiyyah in every aspect of life, under all circumstances and throughout their entire lives. They did not flinch for one single moment – no matter how severe the test. They became the very mirror reflecting the Sunnah of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam).

In brief, the sumtotal of the good deeds of the entire Ummah cannot compete with the honour the Sahabah (RA) enjoy by their companionship with Rasoolullah (sallallahu-alayhi-wasallam).

Ponder for a moment! Can all the combined prayers of the entire Ummah be equal in weight to the two rak'aats of prayer performed by the Sahabahs (RA) in the company of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-

narration. Only such a person will heed the above advice who will reflect on this advice and who is free from hypocrisy, dissidence and atheism..."
(Shari'ato Tareeqat Kaa Talaazum by Maulana Zakariyyah: pp 22-23)

Imaame-Rabbani, Mujaddide Alfe Thaani (RA) says: "To remember such august men with reproach and to be prejudiced against them... how far is this from justness and rectitude!"

The epitome of this entire effort of writing this book is to show that the Sahabah (RA) had aquired respect and dignity by virtue of their companionship with Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). By this companionship their hearts had been illuminated and their innerselves had been completely cleansed. Hence, one should not ruin and destroy one's after-life by being audacious and malicious towards such august and respectable men.

The following statement of Imame Rabbani (RA) is well worth engraving on the tablet of the heart. He says: "How can such mean qualities as envy, rancour, grudge and enmity which are the antitheses of affection and kindness be conceivable in such men who had been blessed with the honour of companionship with the 'best of mankind'? For, it is they, the Sahabah (RA), who are the best of people of this Ummah; and this Ummah is the best of all Ummahs; and they, the Sahabah (RA) are the predecessors of this Millah which abrogates all previous Millahs. They are also those whose era was the best of eras and their master, Hadhrat Muhammad (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) was the most accomplished among all the prophets of Allah. If such base qualities – of which the meanest individual of this Ummah feels ashamed if attributed to him are attributed to the illustrious Sahabah (RA), how can the following facts be proven to be true? – that the Sahabah (RA) are the best of people of this Ummah; that this Ummah is the best of all Ummahs. If, for a single moment, it is believed that the Sahabah (RA) were people with mean qualities then how can this be reconciled with what is established by Nasse Qat'i? – that they are excellent and superior by virtue of being the foremost in embracing Iman and spending their wealth and sacrificing thier lives for the cause of Islam; that their era was the best of eras by virtue of their companionship with the 'best of mankind'.
"Normally, people regard those who spend their lives in the company

social mingling with him will be prohibited.

"And answers and explanations have already been given regarding dissensions and battles that took place between them. Hence, if reviling and taunting them be contrary to categorical proofs (ie established from the Qur'aan and Hadeeth), it is infidelity (kufr), eg. accusing Hadhrat A'i'sha (RA) of adultery; and if taunting them be not contrary to categorical proofs then it is *bid'ah* (innovation) and an immoral act."

(Fatawa Ashrafiyyah: Vol. ii, pp 41, 42)

CONCLUSION

A. The Sahabah (RA) were promised that in the shadow of Rasoolullah's (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) mercy they would be granted every honour and spared all humiliation. Says Allah in the Holy Qur'aan:

• يوم لا يخزى الله النبي والذين آمنوا معه نورهم يسعى بين
ايديهم وبأيمانهم •

Translation: ...On the Day when Allah will not abase the Nabi and those who believe with him, their noor (light) running before them, and on their right hands. (Qur'aan: 22:8)

B. When the standard of faith (Imaan) was set by the Sahabah (RA), the entire Ummah was called on to follow their example; and those who let their tongues loose in opposition to them were stamped with the seal of Nifaaq (hypocrisy) and foolishness: Allah says:

• وإذا قيل لهم آمنوا كما آمن الناس قالوا أنؤمن كما آمن
السفهاء ألا إنهم هم السفهاء ولكن لا يعلمون •

Translation: When it is said to them (the hypocrites): 'Believe as the people believe', they say: 'Shall we believe as the fools believe?' Truly, they themselves are fools, but they do not know!

(Qur'aan: 2:13)

C. The rank given to the Sahabah (RA) is so high that according to a Hadeeth related by Sayyidona Umar (RA), Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) ordered the people of this Ummah to reply in the following manner to anyone who has the audacity to speak ill of

alayhi-wasallam)? The same question applies to fasting, Hajj and charity.

To epitomize this lengthy discussion, it is sufficient to say that this holy group called the Sahabah (RA), is in no way like the common run of individuals of this Ummah. They, the Companions, command a special status and a distinctive station, and this has been bestowed upon them by the explicit texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (RA) has quoted the following Ahadeeth in his book entitled *Fatawa Ashrafiyyah*:

> "Don't decry my Sahabah, for, if anyone from among you happens to spend (in charity) gold equivalent to Mount Uhud, it will never be the same as when they (the Sahabahs RA) spend one mudd or half a mudd of barley."
> "He who loves them, loves them on account of love for me; he who nurses rancour against them, nurses it on account of rancour against me."
> "The fire of Hell will not even touch such a person (Muslim) who saw me or any of my Companions."

Thereafter, he says: "And since Hadhrat Aboo Sufyaan (RA) and Hadhrat Mu'awiyah (RA) are certainly Companions of Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) the abovementioned Ahadeeth will include them as well. Hence, respect and love for them is incumbent (waajib) and it will certainly be unlawful (haraam) to revile them and to harbour rancour and hatred against them. The aspect of their virtues and pious actions are overwhelmingly more dominant than the aspect of their companionship with Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). This fact is established from the Hadeeth: "If anyone from among you happens to spend ..." and "The fire of Hell will not even touch ..." Hence, whatever doubt arises in the mind with regard to the Sahabah (RA), if it arises involuntarily, it is remissible and forgivable; and if it be voluntary then its correction and rectification is necessary and incumbent. And the person who voluntarily indulges in suspicion or reviling or grudging them, then such a person will regarded as an opponent of the prophetic Ahadeeth. Moreover, he will become excluded from the Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah as is evident from the books of the Ahlus-Sunnah. As regards such a person, his Imamat will be abominable (makrooh); and unnecessary

them:

« إذا رأيتم الذين يسبون أصحابي فقولوا : لعنة الله على شركم »

Translation: When you see anyone speaking ill of my Companions, say to him: 'Allah's curse be upon the worse of you two'.

D. When the way of the Sahabah (RA) was established as the practical standard for this Ummah, any kind of opposition to it was and is declared by the Qur'aan to be in direct opposition to Rasoolullah (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam):

« ومن يشاقق الرسول من بعد ما تبين له الهدى ويتبع غير سبيل
المؤمنين نوله ما تولى ونصله جهنم وساءت مصيراً »

Translation: And whoever opposes the Rasool (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam) after The Guidance has become manifest to him, and follows a path other than the path of the Believers (Sahabah), him shall we turn over to what he has turned to, and We shall admit him into the Fire. And it (The Fire) is a hapless journey's end. (4:115)

In the above verse, the word "Believers" refers first of all to the Sahabah (RA). From this it is obvious that the correct manner of following the Rasool is to adopt the way of Sahabah (RA) in all matters of conduct and character.

And Allah knows best.